

ORPHEUS

The Dark Precursor

Deleuze and
Artistic Research

INSTITUTE

Edited by Paulo de Assis and Paolo Giudici

SERIES

Volume II
Image, Space, and Politics

Reprint from The Dark Precursor – ISBN 978 94 6270 118 2 – © Leuven University Press, 2017

The Dark Precursor: Deleuze and Artistic Research

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Volume II

The Dark Precursor in Image, Space, and Politics

Leuven University Press

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Pieter Lozie, "Gent Lightning
20140609 2.55 am," from *Lightning,
Rainbow*, 2014. Courtesy of ©Pieter
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Illustrations on pp.

"Illustraties page 288, 289, 426,
427, 466, 467
© Lucia D'Errico

Press

Wilco B.V., The Netherlands

© 2017 by Leuven University Press /
Universitaire Pers Leuven /
Presses Universitaires de Louvain.
Minderbroedersstraat 4
B-3000 Leuven (Belgium)

ISBN (2-vol. set) 978 94 6270 118 2
e-ISBN (2-vol. set) 978 94 6166 233 0

D/2017/1869/36

NUR: 663

The research leading to these results
has received funding from the
European Union Seventh Framework
Programme ([FP7/2007-2013]
[FP7/2007-2011]) under grant agreement
n° 313419.



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This book is published in the Orpheus Insti-
tute Series

perpetual doubt, constant becoming

Mhairi Vari
Artist, London

The philosophical proposition of the rhizome offers a “structure” (or anti-structure) that goes some way to describe the often unnameable, intangible processes required for the production of art—establishing a set of conditions that support the necessity for unknowingness and uncertainty as methodology.

In taking the rhizome as a basic principal for considering the generation of physical work, employing emergent process rather than construction by design, my practice engages this key concept from Deleuze and Guattari in multiple ways.

In aiming to be composed “not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21), the work consists of many strands, structured from hundreds of thousands of coloured rubber bands, that wrap, stretch, loop, hang, and twist around and across an architectural space. The work exists in the space between, growing among things, opportunistically inhabiting and encompassing architecture as part of its structure where the work “forms a rhizome with the world” (ibid.)—rather than existing separately from it.

The work does not rest within a single discipline: the lines act like drawings in three dimensions, it consumes and melds with architecture, the push and pull of effusive colour in space emphasises painterly qualities while often referencing—in its analogue form—digital technologies and the vastness of “the web.” The practice exists more broadly within the expanded field of sculptural installation, where ideas and processes for generating art are not separable into constituent parts but exist in symbiosis.

The entangled network of filaments from which the work is constructed are like threads of visual organisation “connect[ing] any point to any other point” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21) in a meshwork and bit coding of information. The vibrating strands become a fluid diagrammatic—“a shifting map” (ibid., 19)—of the performative act that constituted its construction.

There are different timescales embedded in the work. The piece may take only minutes, hours, or days to install, although the strands, with their hand-made morphology, have been hundreds, thousands, of hours in the making.

The elastic band is a unit of variable measure and therefore the work lacks exactitude as its overall length is immeasurable and is relative to the amount of tension and weight exerted upon the ropes. The strands are still being made: there is no definable number, no given end to the making of the material: “It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle from which it grows and

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which it overflows” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21). There are many beginnings and ends lost among the mass metrage of loops that expand or contract across space.

Nomadic in nature, the work can be packed down and installed (almost) anywhere. It takes shape for a finite period of time until rolled up ready to be remade in a unique but relative existence in another time and space—much as worm-casts, which represent the aftermath of movement through the ground, exist for a while on the surface until they are washed down again by rain. They may reform, but each time will be different.

The title of the work reflects the overarching uncertainty of process through which one may burrow to arrive at the production of an artwork. The work is a processual murmuration where any seeming point of arrival quickly loses itself as it melds into a point of departure—the journey to seek form continues—arrested momentarily by fleeting instances of articulation.

* * *

In the basement of the Orpheus Institute lies a complex of interconnected open-plan spaces, irreverently described to me as “a recreation room for bored researchers.”

For the fourth iteration of *perpetual doubt, constant becoming* I spent a concentrated day in the bowels of the building, getting familiar with the ups and downs of the architecture, moving through apertures from room to room, looping strands of bands around natural fixtures and features. The lines become a trace through the space of the activity, a temporary remnant. The threads follow routes from chair leg to ceiling, from fridge-efficiency rating label to conduit pipe, connecting random points.

The spilled bands on the floor and drooping swags at first appear like the leftovers from a party, a hangover from some social exchange—reflecting the celebratory nature of the conference as a whole. I could not have predicted the final form of this temporary hang, which came as response to the people and the place tethered to this event.

Packed down and rolled into a wheeled suitcase the work sits in compact darkness until opportunity pops up to unfold again, an aftermath of *The Dark Precursor*.



Figure 2.15.1.



Figure 2.15.2.

Figure 2.15.1. Mhairi Vari, *perpetual doubt constant becoming* (Lydney), 2015, multi-coloured loom bands.

Figure 2.15.2. Mhairi Vari, *perpetual doubt, constant becoming* (John Street), loom bands, steel rods, 2015. Photograph by Andy Keate. Courtesy domobaal.

perpetual doubt, constant becoming

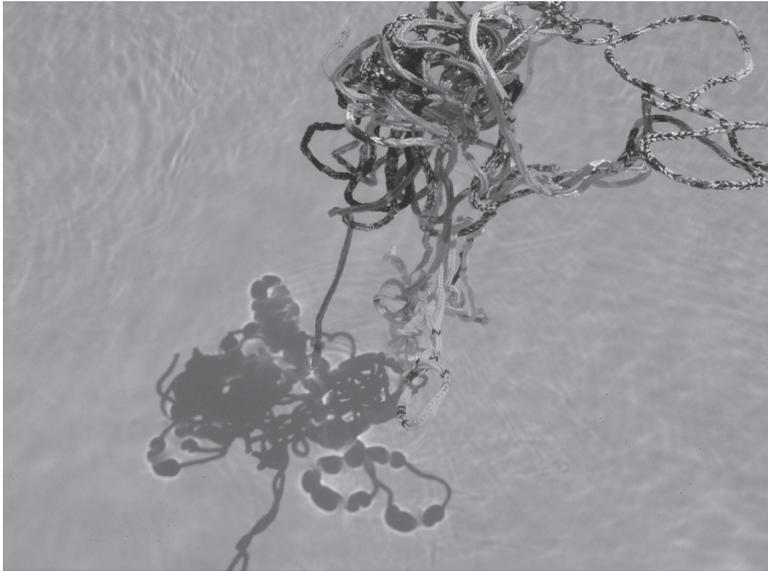


Figure 2.15.3.



Figure 2.15.4.

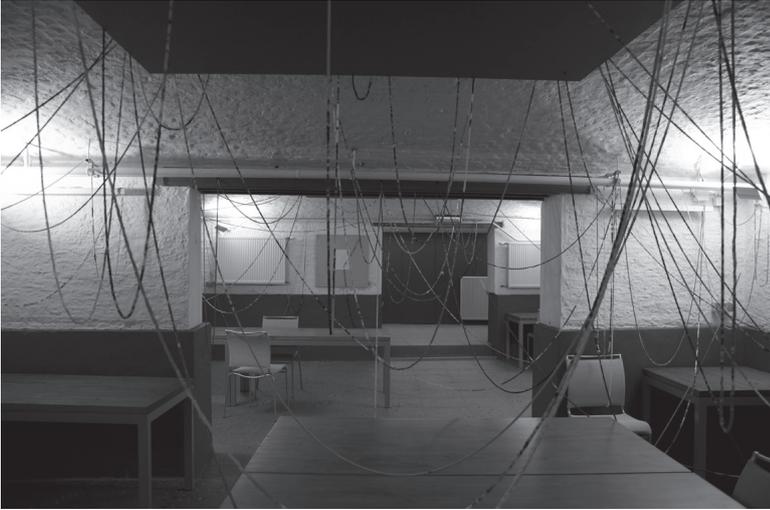


Figure 2.15.5.



Figure 2.15.6.

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Figure 2.15.7.



Figure 2.15.8.



Figure 2.15.9.

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Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian

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